The Library of Congress'

EARLY STATE RECORDS PROJECT

converted from the original microfilm held by the
Vincent C. Immel Law Library, Saint Louis University

through the generous support of a grant from the

Council on Library and Information Resources

This document contains handwritten text that may be partially illegible due to age, penmanship, or deterioration of the medium. LLMC has scanned the material in the same format and page order in which it is maintained in the source document taken from the collection "Records of the States of the United States of America, a microfilm compilation."

231

Vol. 2 83

To the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont.

Gentlemen, 27 Nov. 1778

Whereas the General Assembly of this State did appoint me to wait on the Honorable Meshech Weare, Esq; President of the Council of the State of New Hampshire, with a Letter from his Excellency Thomas Chittenden, Esq; and another Col. Ethan Allen, &c. And whereas several of the Members of the Honorable Council and Assembly of this State, desired me to write to them (on my return from New Hampshire) the state of affairs relative to the Union with sixteen Towns east of Connecticut-River and this State: I therefore beg leave to state the following as a short State of the matter, viz.

When I arrived at Exeter found the General Assembly then sitting, delivered said Letters to the President, who after examining the same in Council, sent them to the House for their inspection: the said Letters were again read and largely discoursed on, and a Committee appointed from both Houses to answer the same — I being then present besides having many other conferences with the Members of both Houses, found that they were unanimous for maintaining Inviolable their Jurisdiction to the East Banks of Connecticut-River, but that they had no disposition to interfere with the State of Vermont in its first described Limits, which will more fully appear by their Resolution in the affair of Mr. Hovey, and an Extract of President Weare's Letter to Col. Ethan Allen, which are as follows, viz.

State of New Hampshire, In the House of Representatives Nov. 10th, 1778.

"According to the Vote of the House of this day, the Honorable Council and House being met in the Assembly Chamber, the Honorable Meshech Weare, Esq; in the Chair, proceeded to take under Consideration the Petition of Nathaniel Hovey, prefered to the Honorable Committee of Safety of this State on the 24th of September last, and the

further transactions thereon — and upon consideration of the same, came to the following Resolutions and reported, that Two Hundred Pounds be Granted to the said Hovey, out of the Treasury, by order of the President, for his present necessities, to be by him accounted for; and that the persons named as Rioters in his complaint and Petition, together with Nehemiah Estabrook, of Lebanon, be notified to attend the hearing of said Petition before the General Assembly if sitting, or Committee of Safety of this State in the recess, on the second Thursday of December next, and that the Secretary be directed to issue proper notice to the said persons; and that Capt. Samuel Atkinson, of Boscowen, be directed to Notify them accordingly, which Report was read and accepted."

Sent up for concurrence.

John Dudley, Speaker. Pro Tem.

A Copy Examined by. E. Thompson, Secry.

As you have been so full and explicit in your sentiments, I trust the Body of your People will be of the same opinion, as I am sure every sensible person will; Notwithstanding blind designs of some uneasy and never to be contented Men, whose Views must certainly be more detrimental to you than they possibly can be to New Hampshire — Whatever may be determined by Congress relative to the acknowledgement of your Independence will be freely acquiesced in by this State.

I find by inquiring into the situation of the Grants (so called) east of Connecticut-River, that the Towns in the County of Chester are almost Unanimously Represented in the General Assembly of New Hampshire — and that about twelve Towns in the County of Grafton are also Represented in the Assembly of New Hampshire — and that the sixteen Towns in connexion with this State by said Union, there

is a large Minority in opposition to said Union.

Amongst the arguments made use of by New Hampshire to support their Claim to Connecticut River are the following, viz.

That by the determination of the Court of Great Britain in establishing Provinces in North America, said Lands were included in the Jurisdiction of New Hampshire, and in consequence of that, many Charters for Towns was Granted by the Governor of said Province with all the privileges and Immunities that any other Towns in said Province did enjoy, which they held under the Crown untill the Revolution, at which time circular Letters was sent to the several Towns thro' that Province, to choose Members to form a Congress to transact the Political Business of the State; at which time several of those Towns now in the Union with this State sent Members. About a year after a second Congress was chosen, and some of said Towns sent Members. Said Congress then established a plan of Government which was to remain in force untill the exigences of the State would admit of more Leasure time to form another, which plan or Constitution said State has ever since and now remain to be governed by. Since the depreciation of Money, an additional pay has been given by the State of New-Hampshire to the Militia of said State, in addition to their Continental pay when in such service; which pay has been chearfully received by the Militia of said Towns.

Thus Gentlemen I have given you a short State of facts, agreeable to the best information I can get, by which you will observe that the State of New Hampshire are willing that the State of Vermont should be a State in its first described limits, west of Connecticut-River.

I have also to observe that by several authen-

tick accounts lately received from the Honorable Continental Congress, that the Delegates are willing that the State of Vermont should be a State within its first described limits, (the Delegates of New York excepted,) which fully appears from that Honorable Body's not passing any Resolves against any of the proceedings of the State of Vermont since its formation, altho' often requested by New York.

Having met with several printed Papers published by order of those gentlemen that withdrew from the General Assembly of this State, at their Session in October last: But as I did not design this letter for an answer thereto, shall make but few remarks thereon. In the course of which papers there is a request to all the Towns on the Grants on both sides of the River, whether united with the State of Vermont or not, to send members to form a Convention to consult and agree upon measures whereby we may all be united together, by being and remaining a distinct State, on such foundation that we may be admitted into Confederation with the United States of America, and under their protection &c. A very large part of the Towns on the Grants west of the Mason Line, and east of Connecticut River, are Represented in the General Assembly of New Hampshire, and consequently they are Represented in Congress: Therefore they can not withdraw from New Hampshire, and connect with any other body politick, and present themselves to Congress to be taken into Confederation with the United States, for they are already taken into Confederation by the way of New Hampshire — The way them Towns could act were they to send members to said Convention, would be to act on the latter clause of the Warrant, which is to claim the antient Jurisdiction of the Government of New Hampshire, and in that way defend ourselves against the pretended right of jurisdiction of any other State, and thereby

become one entire State according to the extent of New Hampshire Province as it stood before the Decree of 1764 to place —— But whether that is the design of the Convention or not, I leave the candid reader to determine.

I appeal to every person's own conscience in the State of Vermont, whether, when the Inhabitants on the west and east sides of the Green Mountain, first connected together to become one body politick, they did it under a view that the Grants east of Connecticut River would join them, and if it had not been for that, they would not have joined in said plan.

All those that did unite together in one body politick to form a State west of Connecticut River, will, I doubt not, on due consideration, pursue that desirable object; (if any difficulties should arise so as unhappily to seperate those Towns east of Connecticut River from this State) for in that view of the case we should then enjoy all we first expected; and as the Constitution of this State is so happily calculated to preserve inviolable the rights of the people; and as in it there is ample provision made for the propagation of the gospel, together with proper Seminaries and Schools of learning which are among the greatest blessings God in his wisdom ever bestowed on the fallen race of man

By what has already been elucidated, it appears that the State of Vermont is in favour with the United States of America: therefore, if the people in said State are, and continue steadfast to maintain the same, they will without doubt support the Independence of said State, as long as the United States do theirs.

Since the choice appears to be in the brest of the good people of this State whether they will be governed by the agreeable Constitution they have made

or lay that aside and seek for connections with a neighboring State which is some in debt, and whose known plan of representation is by numbers, so that it would take five or six of our new Towns to send one member, and when we consider that those infant plantations have gone thro' numberless fatigues and expences to defend their just rights from the arbitrary power of New York; and since this present contest we have been a frontier to three neighboring States, our inhabitants have been obliged to flee before their enemy, our Soldiery often called forth by alarums, who have fought and bled nobly in the field for the defence of their country — Is there not a much greater probability that we should be considered for those extraordinary difficulties, by the Honorable, the Grand Council of America, in defraying the expence of this unnatural war, than by the legislature of any State whose private interest would be nearer connected with ours.

I doubt not but every reasonable person will, on due deliberation determine that it is best, wisest, and cheapest for the good people of this State, to steadily pursue their plan of Government, which will transmit to posterity the blessings of a free State.

I am, Gentlemen, with due respect,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Ira Allen.

Dresden, November 27th, 1778.

N. B. The Laws of this State is come to hand, and will be ready for Sale in a short time.

231 Vol. 4. 279

To the Honorable Council and General Assembly of the State of New Hampshire now Sitting at Exeter in said State

Gentlemen, Nov. 4. 1778

Pursuant to my appointment (by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont) to wait on the Honble Meshech Weare Esqr. President of the Council of the State of New Hampshire with a Letter from His Excellency Thos. Chittenden Esqr. and as in the said Letter Reference was had to me for further Particulars relating to the union of sixteen Towns on the East side of Connecticut River, with the State of Vermont and as it has been the desire of the Honble the General Assembly That I would Give them a short state of facts relating to the said union &c.

I therefore beg Leave to State the following as a short and Concise State of the Matter (viz)

The first movement to form the State of Vermont was from the West Side of the Green Mountain in consequence of which several Committees were sent to the then Counties of Cumberland and Gloucester to see if the People there would unite with the People on the West side of the Mountain to make one Body Politick

About two years ago Col. John Wheelock being apprised of that movement went to the Town of Norwich where one of Sd Committee were and Proposed to them for a number of Towns on the East side of the river to unite with those towns on the west side of Sd river But was answered by said Committee that they were not acquainted with the situation of New Hampshire Therefore they should do nothing about it Last March after the Governor and Council was declared chosen and the Assembly formed agreeable to the Constitution of Sd State, There came in a Committee from the East side of the River Sd. to be chosen

by a Convention of Committees Whereof Mr. Esterbrooks was Chairman and moved in behalf of the New Hampshire Grants East of ye. River (as they were pleased to state it) for a union with the State of Vermont in Consequence of which a Committee was chosen from both Houses to confer with said Committee and make report of their Opinion thereon to the House The Committee after all the Debates thereon reported to the House as their opinion not to connect with said Committee in no way or manner whatsoever The House after mature Deliberation voted to accept of ye Report; which gave such Dissatisfaction to several of the members of the Council and Assembly that Lived near Connecticut River that they declared if them People (Meaning those on the East side of the River) were to be entirely excluded from Connecting with ye State they would withdraw from the then State of Vermont, and Connect with them People and form a New State. When after Long and Tegious Debates the whole was refered to the People at Large and to be brought before the Assembly again at their Next Session in June Col. Payne and others of that Committee Publicly Declared that they had Conversed with a number of the Leading Members of the Assembly of N. Hampshire from the East part of the State who had no Objection to their joining with the State of Vermont but some Members in the western part of ye. State was opposed to it. But Gave it as their Opinions that New Hampshire as a State would make no Difficulty about it, This Last Plea was carried to the people and under this Mistake of the matter a majority of the Towns in the State Voted for the Union, which the General Assembly Could do no otherwise than Confirm they being so Instructed by their Constituents: the assembly then Proceeded to business

amongst which there was an Order Given out for Each Town in the State that see fit to Choos a Justice of the Peace and several Temperary acts Made all to Stant untill the Rising of the Next Assembly

Som time in the month of Augt Governor Chittenden Recd a Letter from the Honble Mesheg Ware Esqr. President of the Council of N Hampshire Shewing the Disapprobation of Sd State to the Union Sum time in September Col. Ethan Allen was appointed to wait on Congress to see how the Political State of Vermont was Viewed by Congress who after the Assembly was formed in October Last Reported to the House that the Members of Congress was unanimously opposed to the Union of the Sixteen Towns Otherwise they Had none of them any Objections to the State of Vermont being a State (the New York members only excepted) At the Session in October last Several members from the East side of the River Took their seats in Consequence of the Union before mentioned Then the Assembly Proceeded to Business But there appeared such Divisions and Debates Relative to the Union that for about thirteen Days there was very little Business Done at which Time three Votes were passed which gave rise to a Dissention being brought into the House the Next day signed by Twenty seven Members of the Council & Assembly (both the Votes and Dissent I have Delivered to the Honble Council) The General Assembly then Proceeded to the Business of the State and Revived sum old Acts and Made Sum New amongst which they Ordered one Commission to be made for the Justices of Each County and all the names of the Justices in the County of Cumberland to be Put in the Commission for that County & in like manner the County of Bennington

I was credably informed by several Worthy Members of the Council & Assembly that the second Vote above Refered to in its Original was Passed as follows (viz)

Whether the Towns East of the River included in the union

with this State Shall be annexed to the County of Cumberland Past in the negative - By several flying reports was informed after the above mentioned Twenty seven members withdrew they formed a Convention chose a Chairman & Clerk and then Proposed to Give an Invitation to all the Towns on the Grants to Join them and form a New State by the Name of New Connecticut; they then Adjourned their Convention to Sum time the next week to be held at Lebanon there was about Eleven Towns on the west side of the River Joined them in this Convention.

Thus Gentlemen I have Given a Short State of the Matter which I do certify upon Honor is the Truth according to the Best of my Memory

Ira Allen

Exeter November 4th. 1778

231 — Vol. V. 285

Windsor December 12th 1778

Honord Sir,

As I wish to do nothing that Concerns a Neighboring State but what should there be made Known I therefore herewith Inclose to you my Printed Letter to the Inhabitants of this State as also an Extract of the Proceeden of a Convention Called at the request of those Gentlemen that withdrew from the Council and Assembly of Vermont at their Session in October last Said Convention was held at Cornish on the 9th day of Instant December

As I Providentially Happened at said Convention and as I have been Conversant with the Principle men in most of the Towns between this and Cohoos shall make a few Observations on the Present Confused state of affairs in these Parts.

There was eight Towns Represented in said Convention from the West side of the River and Probably two or three more may join them But in most if not all of said Towns there is a Large Majority in opposition to such Proceedure.

In the sixteen Towns Said to be in union with this State the Break in the Assembly in October last the Party that was in favour of New Hampshire have Considerably Increased. Within the disaffected Towns on both sides of the River are Several Gentlemen Whose Design is to break up this State and Connect the Whole to New Hampshire for the sole Purpose of Bringing the Seat of Government on Connecticut River at or near the College and to Establish a Plan of Government similar to Vermont. There is no authority exercised East of Connecticut River by this State and I dare engage at the Risque of my Reputation as a man of Honour or Common Sense that the future General Assembly of this State will not Countenance an Encroachment on the State of New Hampshire

In the year 1764 by an arbitrary act of the Crown the Grants West of the River was put under the Jurisdiction

of New York where the Inhabitants have Since Experienced all the Evils that a Colden Dunmore and Tryon together with a Clan of New York Land Jobbers could invent and Inflict in the Course of which Troubles (as I am informed) application was made to New Hampshire to assert their Claim which was Refused

The Inhabitants on the West side of the Green Mountains Boldly asserted their Rights and Defended their Property until the Late Revolution soon after which Overtures was made to the Inhabitants of the then Counties of Cumberland and Gloucester who had in some Degree Submitted to the Arbitrary Power of New York and had their members in the Provincial Congress of said State After many Perswasive Arguments the Inhabitants in said Counties Connected with those on the West side of the Green Mountain to form a State and Proceeded to form a Constitution &c.

Had it not been for that the Inhabitants of this State would by their own consent been Effectually bound to New York by Connecting with them and forming a Constitution &c. Had that been the Case no one would have been so hardy as to have Thought of Claiming the Antient Jurisdiction of New Hampshire no Even New Hampshire of Claiming the now State of Vermont any more than the Massachusells Bay the Southerly part of said States But it seems after Restless uneasy men no having the Good of Either of the States at Heart (but their Own Private Interests and Immoluments) are about to Clame the Antient Jurisdiction of New Hampshire — Should that be the Case doubt not but they will meet with such Treatment as to Justice may Appertain

I am Honor[d] Sir, with Due Respect

Your Most Obedient

Humble Servant

Ira Allen

The Honorable

Meshech Weare Esq[r]